

Edition of September 2, 2005

## **SAGA and MMS Join in Recycling Effort**

**By Erin E. Fogg** ✉  
**Observer Staff Writer**

The Students Against Global Abuse at Herndon High School last week announced a partnership with the Minerals Management Service, a federal agency with offices on Elden Street, to revitalize the building's recycling efforts.

SAGA has joined forces with more than 300 business, churches and schools in the area since its inception in 1989, but MMS will be among the student group's largest collection points.

MMS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, decided to revitalize its recycling efforts among the 400 employees at the Herndon office building. Paul Harris with MMS support services, said he contacted SAGA sponsor Gary Gepford a few months ago looking for an alternative to his commercial recycling company.

Not only will the students relieve MMS of its white paper, colored paper, newspaper and aluminum cans, but the money generated by selling the recycled products will help fund college scholarships.

"The cause is noble," he said. "And it's really not a lot of work."

Through monitoring the building's compliance with the recycling program and continuing efforts to train the staff to recycle materials, Harris said he hopes to increase the current recycling output to one to two tons each month.

Gepford said SAGA recently surpassed its 3 millionth pound of recycled refuse. The approximately 30 active members of the organization have worked hard to visit Herndon, Reston and Sterling businesses to collect paper and cans to recycle.

For its efforts, SAGA has won several community, county, state and national awards. The recycling program has helped provide Herndon students over the years with over \$200,000 in college scholarships.

"We just stand back," Gepford said. "It's a student-run organization. They've been very dedicated to the environmental movement, even more so than the community."

Contact SAGA sponsor Gary Gepford at 703-810-2350.

## Fighting apathy about recycling

By Kali Schumitz  
08/31/2005

Reduce, reuse, recycle. The phrase might sound passe now, but members of Herndon High School's Students Against Global Abuse (SAGA) want you to remember that it is still important.

One ton of recycled paper, for example, will save about 17 20-year-old trees, as well as reducing water and energy use, said Gary Gepford, one of the group's faculty sponsors. The energy saved by each ton of recycled paper is equal to about 380 gallons of gasoline.

"There are a lot of people we know who are not recycling," Gepford said. "Wouldn't it be neat if we could say all of our businesses in Herndon were recycling?"

Minerals Management Service (MMS), a branch of the federal Department of the Interior located in Herndon, recently started working with SAGA to increase employees' recycling efforts. The organization held a press event last week to announce the new initiative, which featured several people who spoke about the importance of recycling to the community.

SAGA students pick up white paper and aluminum cans at Herndon, Reston and Sterling businesses and schools. The money they receive from the recyclables goes into a scholarship fund for students in the club. A ton of white office paper is worth up to \$200, said Pamela Gratton, recycling coordinator for Fairfax County.

A few weeks ago, the group recycled its 3 millionth pound of office paper.

MMS, with its 400 employees, is "one of the biggest jobs" that SAGA has, Gepford said.

"They have a lot of nice, white paper, so we're real excited," Gepford said.

Other large companies that SAGA works with include PB and Independence Air.

Paul Harris, recycling coordinator for MMS, said he hopes that the link between recycling and raising scholarship money for local students will give employees more incentive to separate recyclables and trash.

Many employees "have a lot of apathy toward recycling," Harris said. Now, he said, "We're recycling because it has a direct benefit to kids at Herndon High."

The recycling initiative also includes new, more user-friendly recycling containers. Harris said his goal is to double the amount of recycling at MMS.

In the future, he plans to take the initiative a step further and try to reduce the amount of paper the agency uses to begin with by, for example, reducing bad habits like printing every e-mail that hits your inbox, Harris said.

Gepford said the MMS program will be used as a model that other businesses interested in SAGA's services can come and look at.

Aside from the environmental benefits of recycling, Herndon and Fairfax County officials said, it saves taxpayer money.

More recycling means there is less trash to process, explained Robert Boxer, public works director for the Town of Herndon. Less trash means fewer fees that the town is paying to the county, he said.

"We are always grateful when another organization decides to commit to recycling in Fairfax County," said Gratton, the county recycling coordinator.

She said it is "extremely important" to prevent as much material as possible from going through the county's waste-to-energy facility in Lorton.

"There isn't capacity in the waste-to-energy facility to take care of all this trash until the end of time," Gratton said.



*Environmentally minded high school students visited MMS in September to kick off the new joint recycling effort. In back row, from left are Herndon Director of Public Works Robert Boxer, Herndon High School Faculty Advisor Matt O'Connor Faculty Adviser Gary Gepford, MMS Recycling Officer Paul Harris. In second row, from right are Fairfax County Recycling Coordinator Pamela Gratton and MMS Support Services Chief Rhonda Watkins. Photo by Dianna Bhiwandiwalla, MMS.*

## *Recycling Pact Offers Scholarships*

*By Nicolette Nye, MMS*

**T**he Minerals Management Service and Herndon High School have joined forces to help revitalize the agency's recycling program at the Elden Street location in Herndon. The new program will not only increase recycling efforts but also help provide scholarships to students at the school.

Under an agreement between MMS and the student environmental club, students will collect recycled white paper, colored paper, newspapers and cans from MMS. The club members already collect recyclables from more than 150 local businesses, sell the recycled items and use the proceeds to provide college scholarships to worthy students. MMS participation will add a considerable volume of recyclables to this already-successful venture.

During the past 15 years, the students' recycling program has generated more than \$200,000 in scholarships for Herndon High School students. The scholarships have helped Herndon students with college tuition. For example, one member of the graduating class of 2005 received a \$3,500 scholarship for her participation in the school's environmental club.



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service  
Office of Public Affairs

For Release: August 24, 2005

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### **Local Students Join With Federal Agency in Recycling Efforts**

**What:** Kick Off of Joint MMS/HHS Recycling Program

**When:** Thursday, August 25, 2005 at 3 p.m.

**Where:** The Minerals Management Service, Atrium Building, 318 Elden Street, Herndon, VA, Room 1325

**Who:** Minerals Management Service Officials  
Herndon High School Recycling Coordinators  
Herndon High School Students  
Town of Herndon Recycling Coordinators

The Minerals Management Service and Herndon High School (HHS) have joined forces to help revitalize the agency's recycling program at their Elden Street location. The new program will not only increase recycling efforts, but also help provide scholarships to students at the local high school.

Under an agreement between MMS and the student environmental club at HHS, students will pick up recycled white paper, colored paper, newspapers, and cans from MMS. The HHS student environmental club currently collects recyclables from more than 150 local businesses. The student environmental club sells the recycled items and uses the proceeds to provide college scholarships to worthy students.

Over the past 15 years the recycling program run by the student environmental club has resulted in more than \$200,000 in scholarships for HHS students. These scholarships have been instrumental in assisting Herndon students with college tuition. In fact, one young member of the graduating class of 2005 received a \$3,500 scholarship resulting from her participation in the HHS environmental club.

MMS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, oversees 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf, managing offshore energy and minerals while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments through advanced science and technology research. The OCS provides

30 percent of oil and 21 percent of natural gas produced domestically, and sand used for coastal restoration. MMS collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands, with Fiscal Year 2004 disbursements of approximately \$8 billion and more than \$143 billion since 1982. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which pays for cooperative conservation, grants to states, and Federal land acquisition, gets nearly \$1 billion a year.